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THE HON. MRS. LAKSHMIPATHY :—" (a) The supply of diet articles to Government hospitals is ordinarily obtained through contractors fixed up as a result of tenders and auction held annually.

" (b) The answer is in the affirmative.

" (c) The quality of supplies made is being tested daily by a medical officer and by senior medical officers who make surprise inspections as frequently as possible. Samples of articles like milk, bread, ghee, oil, butter, etc., are taken from the supplies made by contractors, wherever the heads of institutions feel doubtful about the quality, and are sent to the Government Analyst for test. Penal provisions of the contract agreement are enforced when the quality of articles so tested is found to be below par."

MR. K. O. ANTHONI :—" Will the Hon. Minister for Public Health be pleased to state whether there is any machinery to see that the articles supplied for the patients really go to them? "

THE HON. MRS. LAKSHMIPATHI :—" Only strict supervision on the part of the medical officers could see to this."

Workers in the Civil Section of the Hydro-Electric Department, Mettur.

*44 Q.—SRI P. R. K. SARMA: Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries and Labour be pleased to state—

(a) how many workers, men and women, are employed in the Civil section of the Hydro-Electric department at Mettur for repairs and maintenance of buildings;

(b) what their wages and service conditions are;

(c) whether the women workers are being paid only three annas per day;

(d) whether for a day's absence half the amount of Dearness Allowance for the month is denied;

(e) whether the women workers are refused maternity benefit;

(f) whether the Government have received any representations for redress of the grievances of the said workers of the Civil section at Mettur; and

(g) whether any action has been taken or is proposed to be taken?

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" (a) Approximately 18 male workers, 12 women workers and 3 boy workers are employed for repairs and maintenance of buildings.

" (b) The wages of these workers are—

(1) Male worker—Re. 1 to Re. 1–4–0 per day, including dearness allowance.

(2) Female worker—12 annas to 14 annas per day, including dearness allowance.

(3) Boy worker—12 annas to 14 annas per day, including dearness allowance.

" As regards their service conditions, since they are employed casually and on works which are essentially of a seasonal

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nature they are not eligible for any privileges as in the case of the monthly paid work-charged staff or provincial staff.

" (*c*) No.

" (*d*) No.

" (*e*) The rules as they stand at present do not permit the grant of any maternity benefit to this class of labour.

" (*f*) & (*g*) 'Yes.' The matter is under consideration."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" May I ask what is the actual daily rate of wages paid to these workers exclusive of dearness allowance?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" I would like to have notice, Sir. But apart from that, I can assure my hon. Friend that I had a general discussion on the matter of the service conditions of this class of employees. I have also asked the Chief Engineer for Electricity to have a discussion with Mr. Sarma, the President of their Union."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" I have enquired of the Minister whether the women workers are paid only 3 annas a day, but I have not had a definite reply."

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" What is now paid is 13 annas which includes wages and dearness allowance. When I went to Mettur I was staggered when I heard that they were paid 3 annas as wages. When I came back I was very angry with my department and they said they were paying 13 annas. Call it what you will, 3 annas wages and 10 annas dearness allowance or 6 annas wages and 7 annas dearness allowance. As I have stated I am going into this matter also."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" Is the Hon. Minister aware that since his visit to Mettur the Superintending Engineer has fixed an all inclusive daily rate which is 1 anna less than what had been paid to the workers previously?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" I may assure the hon. Member that nothing is the last word on the subject of negotiations. I can assure him that I am in touch with this matter also."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" May I ask whether the maintenance and repair work is given over to the contractors and the work of the civil department is not really of a casual or seasonal nature?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" Notice, Sir."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know whether the labour employed is temporary or casual?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" Temporary and casual, Sir."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" If in the case of temporary workers, they have been sufficiently long in the service of the Electricity Department, may I know why they should be denied the ordinary amenities, such as absence on casual leave and in the case of women especially, maternity benefits?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" That is one of the matters I am going into."

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SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" Will the Hon. Minister kindly call for details of the services of the employees in the Civil Department and examine whether the nature of their service is actually of a temporary or seasonal character? "

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" Yes, Sir."

Application of Indian Factories Act on factories and establishments.

* 45 *Q*.—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries and Labour be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether there are certain kinds of establishments which are still outside the scope of the Indian Factories Act as they do not employ more than a specified number of workers;

(*b*) whether the enabling provision by which Provincial Governments can bring within the scope of the Act work-places where smaller number of workers are employed has been availed of and if so, to what extent;

(*c*) whether the Government contemplate the application of the provisions of the Factories Act to all establishments irrespective of the number of workers employed;

(*d*) whether it is a fact that the definition of 'factory' as it stands excludes several industrial undertakings from the scope of the Act;

(*e*) whether the Government have suggested to the Government of India to bring within the purview of the Factories Act all industrial undertakings; and

(*f*) whether it is a fact that the working conditions in industrial undertakings noticed by the Labour Investigation Committee are traceable to the fact that some of them are outside the scope of the Factories Act?

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI :—" (*a*) Yes.

" (*b*) The Provincial Government have declared—

(1) that the provisions of the whole of the Factories Act shall apply to all places wherein ten or more persons have been working and wherein the processes of (i) groundnut decorticating and rice-milling are carried on with the aid of power and (ii) match manufacture, confectionery, paper printing or binding, type casting and engineering or blacksmithy are carried on with or without the aid of power; and

(2) that the provisions of sections 2 to 4, 9 to 14, 16 to 23, 25, 26, 30 to 32, 34 to 77 and 81 shall apply to all places wherein twenty or more persons have been working and wherein the processes of tanning of skins or hides, cleaning of wool, cashewnut handling and coffee garbling are carried on without the aid of power.

" (*c*) The Government have under consideration a proposal to bring in legislation to control the conditions of labour in unregulated non-power factories.

" (*d*) 'Factory' is defined in the Factories Act as meaning